



opi.mt.gov

**Superintendent of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau believes we need to set
an expectation that every child
graduates from high school.**

Objectives

1. Increase the rate of Montana students graduating from high school college- and career-ready.
2. Establish a support network between schools, businesses, and community organizations for student success.
3. Create school-based and community-based opportunities to inspire students to stay in school and graduate.

THE FACTS

The current legal dropout age of 16 was established in 1921—a time of very different social and economic circumstances than today.

During the 2009-2010 school year, 2,010 students in grades 7 through 12 dropped out of school.

ECONOMICS

There is a well-documented earnings gap between high school graduates and dropouts—an *annual difference of \$9,200*.

In 2005, *21% of families with no high school diploma were living below the poverty line* compared to 7.1% of those with high school diplomas. Workers who did not graduate have an unemployment rate that is twice as high as someone who has a high school diploma.

Nearly 80% of men and 75% of women in Montana State Prison are high school dropouts. About 35% of the population in the Montana State Prison system has achieved neither a diploma nor a GED.

SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 1

DATE 1-12-11

BILL NO. SB44



Key Strategies of Graduation Matters Montana:



Superintendent of
Public Instruction
Denise Juneau

1. Pass legislation to **raise the legal dropout age** from "age 16" to "age 18 or upon graduation."
2. Established the first-ever State Superintendent's **Student Advisory Board** to provide a student perspective about dropout prevention.
3. Updated OPI's **data-collecting capacity** to ensure we know the exact scope of the problem.
4. Requested funding to allow every high school junior to take **the ACT** test, giving them the access and opportunity to go to college.
5. Became a state partner in the "**Partnership for 21st Century Skills**," an initiative to ensure Montana students are armed with the skills and tools they need to enter college and be competitive in the 21st century workforce.
6. Joining 40 other states in adopting evidence-based **National Common Core Standards** in English Language Arts and Math that are higher, clearer and more rigorous benchmarks for student achievement.
7. Building **business partnerships** to connect business and industry to student success.
8. Working with schools, post-secondary education and businesses to establish Big Sky Pathways, which provides **quality career preparation** for students.
9. Work to **improve Montana's lowest performing schools** through OPI's "Schools of Promise" initiative.
10. Support **flexibility in learning** through programs such as the Montana Digital Academy, a new program which offers students access to online courses taught by Montana teachers.



**Graduation
Matters
Montana**
opi.mt.gov

Since 2002, 12 states have raised the compulsory school age from 16 to 17 or 18. Currently, 30 states have a compulsory school age of 17 or 18, and 20 states have a compulsory school age of 18.⁸

Evidence that raising the legal dropout age produces results

Dropout rates decreasing ->										
State	Date of enactment	Dropout rate prior to change	Dropout rates 2001-2002	Dropout rates 2002-2003	Dropout rates 2003-2004	Dropout rates 2004-2005	Dropout rates 2005-2006	Dropout rates 2006-2007	Dropout rates 2007-2008	Dropout rates 2008-2009-2010
CT ¹	2002	3.0% (2000-01)	2.4%	2.1%	1.8%	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.9%	
KS ²	1996	3.1% (1996-97)	2.2%	1.5%	1.61%	1.47%	1.30%	1.82%	1.67%	1.39%
SD ³	2007	3.4% (2007-08)								2.7%
NH ⁴	2007	3.2% (2006-07)							2.5%	1.7%
UT ⁵	1999	5.2% ⁶ (1998-99)	3.7%	Data not found			4.0%	4.5%	3.8%	3.3%
IL ⁷	2004	5.35% (2003-04)				4.52%	3.94%	3.98%	3.91%	3.37%
										2.8%

¹ Connecticut State Department of Education website: http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/WEB/ct_report/DropoutDTVviewer.aspx

² Kansas State Department of Education website: Dropouts General Information Report 8/20/2010 <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1870>

³ South Dakota Department of Education website: <http://doe.sd.gov/ofm/statdigest.asp>

⁴ New Hampshire Department of Education website: Dropouts and Completers <http://www.education.nh.gov/data/dropouts.htm>

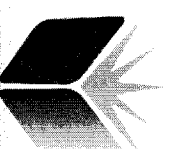
⁵ Utah State Office of Education website: <http://www.schools.utah.gov/main/DATA-STATISTICS/Educational-Data/Graduation-Dropout-Rates.aspx>

⁶ Data from *Final Report of the Task Force to Study Raising the Compulsory Public School Attendance Age to 18 Submitted to the Maryland General Assembly and Governor December 1, 2007*

⁷ Illinois State Board of Education website: www.isbe.net/research/html/eov_report.htm

⁸ Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic, Nov. 2010.

A report by Civic Enterprises Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins's University America's Promise Alliance



Why do we need to raise the legal dropout age in Montana?

Superintendent Juneau believes we need to set an expectation for every child in Montana to graduate from high school. In today's global economy, a quality education is the key to economic prosperity for our young people. Our goal is that all Montana students graduate from high school college- and career-ready.

The current legal dropout age of 16 was established in 1921—a time of very different social and economic circumstances than today. On average, high school dropouts nationwide earn \$9,200 less per year than high school graduates and about one million dollars less over a lifetime than college graduates.¹

How do we compare? Thirty states have a legal dropout age higher than Montana.²

- **Age 16: 20 states** and the Virgin Islands (AK, AZ, DE, FL, GA, ID, IA, KY, MD, MA, MN, MO, MT, NY, NC, ND, NJ, RI, VT, WY)
- **Age 17: 10 states** (AL, AR, CO, IL, ME, MS, PA, SC, TN, WV)
- **Age 18: 20 states** and the District of Columbia, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico (CA, CT, HI, IN, KS, LA, MI, NE, NV, NH, NM, OH, OK, OR, SD, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI)

The national median state graduation rate (graduates on time in four years) was 74.6 last year, while Montana had 80.7% of its students graduate on time. In 2009, 2,423 students in grades 7-12 dropped out of school. The 2008-2009 dropout rate (snapshot of one year's data) for Montana high schools was 5.1 percent.

How does not addressing Montana's dropout rate impact our economy?

Nearly 80% of male inmates and 75% of women inmates at Montana State Prison are high school dropouts.³

In 2005, 21% of families with no high school diploma were living below the poverty line, compared to 7.1% of those with high school diplomas. In addition, workers who did not graduate from high school have an unemployment rate that is twice as high as someone who has a high school diploma.

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, the lost lifetime earnings in Montana from dropouts this year alone total nearly \$830 million. Montana would save more than \$29.8 million in health care costs over the lifetime of each class of dropouts. The economy of Montana would see a combination of crime-related savings and additional revenue of about \$19.6 million each year if the male high school graduation rate would increase by just 5 percent.

¹ "The Silent Epidemic, Perspectives of High School Dropouts," John M. Bridgeland, John J. Dilulio, Jr., and Karen Burke Morison, 2006

² Education Commission for the States, Compulsory School Age Requirements, June 2010

³ Montana Department of Corrections, 2009 Biennial Report